

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 TOKYO 03617 191152Z

62

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PA-01 USIA-06

PRS-01 SP-02 L-02 /064 W

----- 119028

R 190854Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8782

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

US MISSION EC BRUSSELS

US MISSION GENEVA 1538

US MISSION OECD PARIS 3382

CUSJF

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB JA

SUBJ: SPRING LABOR OFFENSIVE, REPORT II - TACTICS AND PROSPECTS

REF: TOKYO 2375

SUMMARY. FIRST STRIKES OF CURRENT SPRING STRUGGLE SCHEDULED MARCH 27 WITH THREATS BY JNR UNIONS OF 24 HOUR WALKOUT AND BY PRIVATE RR WORKERS OF 12 HOURS. MOST UNIONS IN PRIVATE INDUSTRY HOPING TO CONCLUDE NEGOTIATIONS IN APRIL WHILE PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS CLIMAXING THEIR STRUGGLE IN MAY. WITH LAYOFFS CONTINUING, SOME FIRMS PROPOSING TO GRANT NO INCREASES FOR NEXT SIX TO 12 MONTHS, AND STEEL INDUSTRY REPORTEDLY AGREED TO OFFER ONLY QTE AROUND 15 PERCENT UNQTE, JAPANESE WORKERS NOW SHOWING SOME SLIGHT INDICATIONS THAT THEY ARE RESIGNED TO MORE MODERATE INCREASES THIS YEAR. END SUMMARY.

1. SPRING STRUGGLE SHCHEDULE. IN LESS THAN SOLID LABOR FRONT,  
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PAGE 02 TOKYO 03617 191152Z

SOHYO-CONTROLLED JOINT SPRING STRUGGLE COMMITTEE SCHEDULED TO

LAUNCH FIRST WAVE OF STRIKES MARCH 27, SECOND WAVE IN APRIL AND CLIMAX WITH THIRD WAVE IN MID MAY. DOMEI UNIONS AND THOSE COORDINATED BY IMF-JAPAN COUNCIL (WHICH INCLUDES SOHYO, DOMEI, AND CHURITSUOREN UNGONS) EXPECT THEIR NEGOTIATIONS TO CLIMAX IN MID APRIL WITH TEKKOROREN (STEELWORKERS) AGAIN THIS YEAR MAKING THE FIRST MAJOR SETTLEMENT AND ESTABLISHING THE GENERAL LEVEL OF WAGE INCREASES. DISPARITY IN TIMING OF SPRING STRUGGLE PEAKS ATTRIBUTABLE TO DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR UNIONS. SOHYO'S PUBLIC SECTOR UNIONS DESIRE TO DELAY ANY SERIOUS STRIKES UNTIL AFTER LOCAL ELECTIONS. THEY FEEL THAT TO COMBINE ELECTIONEERING WITH STRIKES WOULD DILUTE THEIR EFFECTIVENESS IN BOTH ARENAS, AND THAT STRIKES BEFORE THE ELECTIONS MIGHT HURT THE CHANCES OF CANDIDATES THEY SUPPORT. PRIVATE SECTOR UNIONS, ANTICIPATING A STEEL SETTLEMENT IN MID APRIL, WANT TO CONCENTRATE THEIR PRESSURE AT THAT TIME AND COMPLETE THE WAGE STRUGGLE BEFORE GOLDEN WEEK BEGINS APRIL 29.

2. TRANSPORT STRIKES. JNR UNIONS HAVE ANNOUNCED WORK-TO-RULE SLOWDOWNS MARCH 25 AND 26 AND THREATEN A NATIONWIDE STRIKE ON 27. ALSO GOING OUT THAT DAY ARE THE POSTAL AND TELECOMMUNICATION WORKERS (ZENFEI AND ZENDENTSU). PRIVATE RR WORKERS UNION (SHITETSUSOREN AND MUNICIPAL TRANSPORT WORKERS ALSO SAY THEY WILL GO OUT FROM MIDNIGHT TO NOON. (COMMENT: THE PAST PRACTICE HAS BEEN TO CALL SPOT STRIKES AT STRATEGIC LOCATIONS, MINIMIZING THE NUMBER OF WORKERS ACTUALLY OUT ON WHAT ARE STILL ILLEGAL WALKOUTS). NONETHELESS MARCH 27 LOOKS LIKE A BAD DAY FOR TRAVELERS AND COMMUTERS.

3. OTHER PUBLIC SECTOR UNIONS ARE SCHEDULING WORKSHOP RALLIES OR SHORT STRIKES, E.G. MILLION MEMBER LOCAL GOVT EMPLOYEES UNION (JICHIRO) HAS ANNOUNCED STRIKES OF QTE OVER ONE HOUR UNQTE. (COMMENT: BIG AS JICHIRO IS IT DOES NOT APPEAR A UNIFIED FORCE; AND POWER OF ITS HEADQUARTERS TO SECURE UNITED ACTION HAS YET TO BE DEMONSTRATED. JICHIRO IS PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE THIS YEAR. GOJ HAS DISCOVERED THAT SOME PREFECTURES AND MUNICIPALITIES ARE PAYING LOCAL PUBLIC SERVANTS (LPS) MORE THAN OPPOSITE NUMBERS EMPLOYED BY THE GOJ DESPITE FACT THAT THE LATTER SUBSIDIZES AND SUPPOSEDLY SEES THAT LPS AND NPS RECEIVE EQUAL WAGES. POPULAR REACTION TO THIS SITUATION HAS LED SOME TOWN AND CITY COUNCILS TO PRESS FOR LPS WAGE CUTS).

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PAGE 03 TOKYO 03617 191152Z

4. WAGE INCREASE PROSPECTS. GOJ AND INDUSTRY PRESSURE TO HOLD DOWN WAGE INCREASE SETTLEMENTS CONTINUES STRONG. TEN LARGEST EMPLOYERS IN STEEL, SHIPBUILDING ELECTRICAL MACHINERY AND AUTO MANUFACTURING MEETING WITH EMPLOYER ASSOCIATION (NIKKEIREN), QTE REACHED AN AGREEMENT UNQTE THAT STEEL WOULD LIMIT ITS WAGE INCREASE TO AROUND 15 PERCENT IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE PRICE HIKES IN STEEL. ONE PAPER PREDICTED SHIPBUILDING WOULD OFFER

ONLY TEN PERCENT. SOME TEXTILE AND ELECTRICAL APPLIANCE FIRMS  
HAVE PROPOSED TO THEIR UNIONS THAT NO INCREASES BE PAID FOR SIX  
MONTHS TO A YEAR. (COMMENT: THE MESSAGE MAY BE GETTING ACROSS.  
IN RECENT LABATT DISCUSSIONS WITH LOCAL LABOR UNION OFFICIALS  
IN NAGOYA, THEY INDICATED THAT WHILE HOPING FOR AS MUCH AS 20  
PERCENT WAGE INCREASES, THEY WERE BECOMING RESIGNED TO THE  
PROSPECT OF LESS. THEY DID NOT RPT NOT ANTICIPATE MAJOR LABOR  
UNREST IN PRIVATE SECTOR EVEN IF INCREASES WERE LOW. A SIGNIFICANT  
NEW FACTOR THIS YEAR WHICH MAKES IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR LABOR TO  
MAINTAIN SOLID FRONT THAN IN PAST IS FACT OF GENERALLY ACKNOWLEDGED  
WIDE DIFFERENCES--BY SIZE OF ENTERPRISE, FROM ONE INDUSTRY TO  
ANOTHER, AND AMONT INDIVIDUAL COMPANIES--IN FIRMS' ECONOMIC  
STRENGTH AND ABILITY TO GRANT PAY INCREASES. CONSEQUENTLY, WE  
EXPECT THAT INDIVIDUAL INDUSTRY AND ENTERPRISE SETTLEMENTSQKWILL  
VARY OVER MUCH WIDER RANGE FROM OVERALL AVERAGE INCREASE THAN  
HAS BEEN THE CASE IN PAST YEARS.)  
HODGSON

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